United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General welcomes successful conclusion of Uruguay Round of GATT talks as major contribution to strengthening of international trade relations; says United Nations is ready to cooperate fully with proposed World Trade Organization.

- Third Committee approves draft resolution on post of United Nations high commissoner for human rights; that individual, appointed as Under-Secretary-General, would be charged with helping prevent human rights violations throughout world.

- Department of Humanitarian Affairs launches inter-agency appeal for $284 million in emergency humanitarian aid for Liberia through December 1994; seeks to facilitate implementation of Cotonou Peace Agreement.

- Secretary-General formally receives reports on economic benefits and ramifications for communities in Cyprus of proposed confidence-building measures regarding Varosha and Nicosia International Airport.

- Special Commission completes second survey in Iraq to plot gamma radiation emissions; seeks to verify that elements identified and locations are consistent with Iraq's declaration of its nuclear programme

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has warmly welcomed the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. According to a United Nations spokesman, the Secretary-General described the agreement as a major contribution to the strengthening of the multilateral trading system and, thus, to the predictability and security of international trade relations. He said it should bring renewed growth to the world economy, and emphasized the United Nations' readiness to cooperate fully with the proposed World Trade Organization "for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples".

(more)

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Mr. Boutros-Ghali congratulated the Governments participating in the Round for demonstrating political will and statesmanship and praised the role played by the Director-General of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). He said that in a negotiating process of such immense scope and complexity the resulting package could never completely satisfy all the parties, but that this was an outcome to which all could rally. It was to be hoped that appropriate action would be taken to enable countries, especially developing countries and those in transition to a market economy, to take full advantage of the gains achieved and to benefit in areas where they might be disadvantaged.

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The General Assembly would create the post of United Nations high commissoner for human rights under the terms of a draft resolution approved this morning by the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural). According to the text, the high commissioner would possess a high moral standing as well as the understanding of diverse cultures necessary for impartial, objective, non-selective and effective performance.

The Secretary-General would appoint the high commissioner, to be approved by the Assembly, to serve a four-year term at the rank of Under-Secretary-General. That individual would be charged with playing an active role in preventing human rights violations throughout the world, and engaging in a dialogue with all Governments with a view to securing respect for human rights. The Secretary-General would be requested to provide appropriate staff for the fulfillment of the high commissioner's mandate, without diverting resources from development programmes and activities.

While the establishment of a high commissioner for human rights has been discussed for decades, it was formally brought to the attention of the General Assembly by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in June of this year. The Declaration recommended that the Assembly begin priority consideration of the issue at this session.

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The Department of Humanitarian Affairs today launched an inter-agency appeal for $284 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Liberia through December 1994. It said it was essential to maintain the existing humanitarian programme in Liberia not only for the sake of the population affected by the conflict there, but also to create a climate conducive to implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement. The Agreement offered a chance to resolve the country's political and military crisis and required an expansion in certain humanitarian activities, particularly those dealing with the return of refugees, the resettlement of displaced persons, and the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

The international community had responded generously to Liberia's food aid needs during a series of appeals since 1990, but there had been serious shortfalls in other sectors, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs noted. However, despite those shortfalls and problems of access and security, the

emergency relief programme had averted a potential major tragedy. It was now important to shift the emphasis from emergency relief to reconstruction and rehabilitation.

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As part of his ongoing efforts to resolve the situation in Cyprus, the Secretary-General yesterday formally received the reports of the two teams of experts on the economic benefits and ramifications of his proposed package of the confidence-building measures relating to the Varosha and Nicosia International Airport. The Secretary-General had informed the Security Council in October of his decision to send the two teams to Cyprus to make an assessment of the effects of the package so that they were fully understood by all concerned.

The reports are to be made available to the leaders of both sides of the Cyprus conflict. The team of economic experts concluded that the implementation of the package would yield significant economic benefits to both communities. The benefits would be greater for the Turkish Cypriot side because of the relative size of its economy and their impact in alleviating the serious obstacles currently confronting the Turkish Cypriot economy. The team of experts on Nicosia Airport confirmed the feasibility of reopening it in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards at a relatively modest cost of $36 million, and said the task could be completed within 18 months.

Addressing a press conference at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cyprus, Joe Clark, said the reports illustrated that there were practical ways to solve whatever problems arose with the proposed measures, if there was the political will to make the package of ideas work.

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The Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq has completed a second survey to plot the locations of emmissions of gamma radiation in that country, particularly those above normal local background levels. The Commission was seeking more detailed information on emissions from certain areas surveyed in September and to investigate new areas. Five new sites were surveyed, bringing the total so far to seven. The sites were located in and around Baghdad and in central and north western Iraq.

The survey, which was conducted with helicopter-mounted sensors, was undertaken in order to verify that the radio-elements identified and their locations were fully consistent with Iraq's declaration of its nuclear programme. Future missions will be able to detect any changes in radiation levels. Major changes in those levels might indicate movements of radioactive materials which would be subject to monitoring and verification under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plan to ensure Iraq's compliance with its obligations not to reacquire a nuclear capability.

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